

Public Testimony Regarding SB 924

Members of Committee on Commerce,

My name is Sam Tracy, and I have lived in South Windsor, CT my whole life. I am currently a college student, attending the University of Connecticut, and am a member of the environmentally-focused learning community, EcoHouse. I strongly support the provision of this bill allowing for drivers of hybrid and electric cars to use the carpool lane, regardless of the number of passengers.

I think everyone can agree that hybrid and electric vehicles are good. Whether or not you believe in global warming or peak oil, everyone appreciates efficiency, and these cars are much more efficient than standard vehicles. The only concern that many people voice is that the cars are often very expensive. For example, the new Nissan Leaf's MSRP is \$33,720. The cost is defrayed by federal incentives, but these are likely to be cut in the coming months, as the federal and state budget are in pretty bad condition. Allowing drivers of these efficient vehicles to use the carpool lane would be a good incentive to buy these cars, with no cost to the state.

As someone who commutes from Storrs to Hartford three times a week, I know how terrible the traffic can be on Connecticut's highways. There have been many times when, sitting in bumper-to-bumper traffic, I had wished I had a passenger with me so I could take the empty carpool lane. I'm sure everyone has had that feeling. I would probably purchase a pass to use the HOV lane for a few hundred dollars, and I am sure that daily commuters (with more money than I have) would be willing to pay even more. Therefore, this would be a very strong incentive for people to purchase more efficient hybrid and electric vehicles.

After all, the HOV lane was designed in order to incentivize carpooling, the ultimate goal of which is to be more efficient. If a single person's car is efficient enough, they should be able to use that lane.

I plan on buying a new car once I graduate from school in 2013 and get a real job. I am much more likely to buy a hybrid vehicle if I knew I would be able to bypass traffic jams with it, and I am sure that countless others, of all ages, would do the same. If you pass this bill, I will buy an electric car when I'm out of college.

Thank you,
Sam Tracy